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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
SCOPING DOCUMENT**

**XCEL ENRGY  
CANNON FALLS TRANSMISSION PROJECT  
PUC DOCKET #E002/TL-06-459**

**Prepared by the Staff of the**



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**MAY 12, 2006**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Xcel Energy notified the PUC by letter dated March 20, 2006, that the Company intended to utilize the Alternative Permitting Process for the proposed Cannon Falls Transmission Line Project. This complies with the requirement of Minn. R. 4400.2000, subp. 2, to notify the PUC at least 10 days prior to submitting an application (The Power Plant Siting Act identifies the projects that qualify for review under the Alternative Review Process. Minn. Stat. 116C.575, subd. 20).

Xcel Energy filed the HVTL route permit application on April 25, 2006.

In accordance with the Power Plant Siting Act a site permit and a route permit is required before a high voltage transmission line (HVTL) can be constructed. The power plant siting act requirement became law in 1973 in Minnesota Statutes, 116C.51 through 116C.69. The rules to implement the permitting requirement for a HVTL are in Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400. A HVTL is defined as a conductor of electric energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operating at a nominal voltage of 100 kilovolts or more either immediately or without significant modification.

The application will be reviewed under the Alternative Review Process (Minnesota Rules 4400.2010) of the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes 116C.51 to 116C.69). Under the Alternative Review Process, an applicant is not required to propose any alternative sites or routes. The Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting Staff prepares a document called an Environmental Assessment, and a public hearing is required but it need not be a contested case hearing. The PUC has six months to reach a decision under the Alternative Process from the time the application is accepted. Copies of the application, along with other pertinent documents can be obtained through the DOC Project Manager and maybe viewed at PUC web site (<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=18548>).

The official process begins with the determination by the PUC that the application is substantially complete. The PUC accepted the application on May 4, 2006; the final route permit decision must be made by November 4, 2006.

DOC will conduct public information/scoping meeting in which details concerning the proposed Cannon Falls Transmission Project will be presented and governmental agencies, organizations, and the general public will be afforded an opportunity to ask questions and provide input into the environmental review scoping decision.

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On March 30, 2005, the Environmental Quality Board issued a Large Electric Power Generating Plant (LEPGP) Site Permit to Invenergy Cannon Falls, LLC (EQB Docket No. 04-85-PPS-Cannon Falls EC) to construct and operate a LEPPG in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. The Cannon Falls Energy Center (CFEC) will consist of two simple cycle combustion turbines. The nominal capacity of the facility will be 357 MW. The primary fuel will be natural gas with low sulfur distillate fuel oil as a backup.

As part of the current request before the PUC, Xcel Energy proposes construction of a 0.98 mile (5,170 ft) double circuit 115 kV/115 kV transmission line, 1.3 miles (6,945 ft) of two single circuit 115 kV transmission lines and the construction of a 161 kV/115 kV substation. The new substation, identified as the Colvill Substation, will be located within the CFEC property. The proposed Cannon Falls Transmission Project is required to support the interconnection of the CFEC.

The proposed 115 kV transmission line does not qualify as a “large energy facility” because it is less than 10 miles long (Minn. Stat. 216B.2421, subd. 2(3)). Therefore, no CON is required for the proposed project.

### **3.0 EA SCOPING PROCESS**

The purpose of the scoping process is to provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the development of the scope of the EA by holding a public meeting and soliciting public comment.

On Monday, June 5, 2006, the Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting staff (DOC EFP) will hold a public information meeting at the Cannon Falls Government Center. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the proposed project, to answer questions, and to allow the public an opportunity to suggest alternatives and impacts that should be considered during preparation of the environmental review document. Written comments may also be submitted; written comments must be submitted no later than June 12, 2006.

Written comments should be mailed to Bill Storm ([bill.storm@state.mn.us](mailto:bill.storm@state.mn.us)), Minnesota Department of Commerce, 85 7<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 500, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198.

A scoping decision will be made by the Commissioner of the DOC. That decision will be made shortly after the close of the comment period. Persons who want to be advised of the Commission’s scoping decision can register their names with the DOC EFP staff at the public meeting, on the PUC website or contact Bill Storm at (651) 296-9535. The final scoping decision will also be posted on the PUC website.

### **4.0 DRAFT SCOPING OUTLINE**

The Environmental Assessment on the Cannon Falls Transmission Project will address and provide information on the following matters:

#### **A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

1. Purpose of the Transmission Line.
2. Project Location and Environmental Setting
3. Engineering and Operation Design
  - a. Transmission Line and Structures
  - b. Transmission Capacity
  - a. Construction Procedures
  - b. ROW Maintenance

## **B. IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES**

1. Human Settlements
2. Noise
3. Aesthetics
4. Recreation
5. Transportation
6. Land Use
7. Prime Farmland
8. Soils and Geology
9. Flora
10. Fauna
11. Archaeological and Historic Features
12. Air Quality
13. Surface Water
14. Wetlands
15. Human Health and Safety to include Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)
16. Potential for radio, television and cell phone interference from transmission lines

### **5.0 ALTERNATIVES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EA**

The DOC EFP staff is not recommending that any additional routes be evaluated in the EA.

### **6.0 SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF EA**

The Environmental Assessment on the HVTL will be completed by July 31, 2006.

Upon completion of the EA, the DOC EFP staff will notify those persons who have asked to be notified of the completion. In addition, the DOC EFP staff will publish notice of the availability of the EA in the EQB Monitor (the bi-weekly newsletter of the EQB). The EA will be made available for review and will be posted on the PUC webpage. The DOC EFP staff will hold a public hearing in the Cannon Falls area to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and to comment on the EA and the HVTL permit application. The public will also have a period of time (at least 10 days) after the hearing to submit written comments.

Comments on the EA shall become part of the record in the proceeding.

### **7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF PERMITS**

The Environmental Assessment will include a list of permits that will be required for the project proposers to construct this project. The following permits have been identified as potential:

### POTENTIAL REQUIRED PERMITS

| Permit                                         | Jurisdiction           |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Road Crossing Permits                          | County, Township, City |
| Lands Permits                                  | County, Township, City |
| Building Permits                               | County, Township, City |
| Over-width Loads Permits                       | County, Township, City |
| Driveway/Access Permits                        | County, Township, City |
| Route Permit Application (Alternative Process) | PUC                    |
| NPDES Permit                                   | MPCA                   |